

Contents

- Announcements & events
- Conference report:
#StatelessKids in Europe
- What's new: Publications,
Tools & Resources
- What's new: Law & Policy
- Popular on Twitter this
Month
- A day in the life of...

A day in the life of... Stephanie Gordon, Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Leicester – researching statelessness in China

“It is rewarding researching a population that has been overlooked, particularly as it impacts so many families in China. I found that many families were motivated to participate in my research because they saw it as an opportunity to share their experiences with an international audience...”

Read the full interview in this month's "A day in the life of..." at the bottom of this bulletin.

Announcements & events

[2015 UNHCR Award for Statelessness Research](#)

This year, academic institutions are again invited to nominate excellent research by undergraduate, graduate and doctoral researchers in the field of statelessness for the UNHCR Award for Statelessness Research. Three awards from a total prize pool of USD 4,000 will be granted to the best research at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. The full [nomination guidelines can be found online here](#). **Deadline for nominations: 1 July 2015.**

Event on protecting the human rights of the stateless Rohingya

A side meeting of the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\) NGO Consultations](#) will look at the challenge of *Protecting the Human Rights of Stateless Rohingya*. Panellists will provide an overview of the human rights situation of the Rohingya within Myanmar and neighbouring countries, and will outline solutions for this complex and entrenched problem. This event will take place on **Thursday 2 July, from 11.15am - 1.00pm (Room 4, ICCG, Geneva)**.

[Event on “developing an integrated civil society approach to tackling statelessness”](#)

The European Network on Statelessness, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion invite you to a side event: *Developing an integrated civil society approach to tackling statelessness: New research and entry points related to forced displacement, trafficking and childhood statelessness*. The event will take place in Room MBTO4 of the **UNHCR Building in Geneva (Rue de Montbrillant 94), on Thursday 2 July from 18.45-20.00**.

[Vacancy for a Fellow to work on nationality and statelessness in the Americas, at CEJIL](#)

The *Center for Justice and International Law* (CEJIL) seeks a bilingual (Spanish/English, with Portuguese or French being a plus) attorney possessing academic and/or professional experience related to nationality, statelessness, and migration-related issues in the Americas. The position will be based in Washington, DC and may require some international travel. The legal fellow will support CEJIL's activities aimed at contributing to the implementation of the UNHCR's Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and the Brazil Plan of Action, including serving as coordinator of the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness (ANA). **Deadline for applications: 3 July 2015.**

[2015 UNHCR-NGO Consultations: Session on solutions to statelessness](#)

The annual UNHCR – NGO consultations will take place from 1 – 3 July in Geneva. In keeping with the “Solutions” theme of this year's consultations, the statelessness session will focus on the question “How can civil society help to implement

UNHCR's Global Action Plan?" For those attending the consultations: **the Statelessness Session will take place on Friday 3 July, from 9.00 – 10.45am (in Room 3, ICCG Geneva).**

Call for country contributors on statelessness and sustainable development

Contributions are sought for country-by-country global report on statelessness and sustainable development. Contributors would complete a 2-page template based on their country-specific expertise by early 2016 to be peer reviewed. Contact email: statelessnessreport@gmail.com. Please ensure your email has correct subject line: for info, 'contributor information'; for specific queries, 'contributor query'; to apply, use your country of interest and name as subject line. Include CV, PDF of one relevant publication and a list of key sustainable development and statelessness issues in your country of interest. **Applications close on 31 July**

Funding opportunity: Internships, Exchanges and Placements Initiative

The Open Society Initiative for Europe has put out a call for proposals to support the antidiscrimination field by encouraging strengthened solidarity and interaction between mainstream or generalist human rights/antidiscrimination NGOs, minority-led or grassroots organizations, and a variety of actors, including young graduates with a minority background, researchers, and journalists. NGOs based in Western Europe can apply for funds in support of internships, staff exchanges or short-term placements of researchers or journalists. **Deadline for submission of proposals: 8 August 2015.**

Call for Papers for newly established Statelessness Working Paper Series

The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion invites submissions of research/policy papers for its *Statelessness Working Paper Series*. This online, open access resource offers an avenue for centralising and sharing the latest knowledge, developments, and research findings on statelessness from multiple fields (including, but not limited to law, sociology, history, economics and health), so as to inform a more effective response to the issue globally. **Deadline for first cycle of working papers: 15 September 2015.**

Conference on #StatelessKids in Europe

This month regional a [conference](#) took place in Budapest which represented a central activity of the ENS campaign "[None of Europe's Children should be Stateless](#)" and was convened as a forum for the sharing of knowledge on legal, policy and programming interventions. A hundred scholars, practitioners and policy makers came together and discussed how to ensure that no more of Europe's children suffer from statelessness, by sharing research and policy experiences.

An [Action Statement](#) was adopted at the end of the conference and you can also view [photos](#) of the event online or read the series of special [blogs](#) about the issue.

The conference served as a stage to unveil new research conducted by ENS in eight European countries, [Italy](#), [Estonia](#), [Macedonia](#), [Poland](#), [Romania](#), [Slovenia](#), [Albania](#) and [Latvia](#). This will be followed by a comparative final report to be published in September. You can join the debate on twitter [#StatelessKids](#).



What's new: Publications, Tools & Resources

New UNHCR Global Statistics – also on statelessness

This month, UNHCR released a new Global Trends report, with the latest statistics on refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. Data is now available on statelessness for 77 countries worldwide, accounting for some 3.5 million stateless persons (although over 10 million are estimated to be affected in all). The report can be downloaded [here](#) and you can also access the full data set in an Excel table [here](#) (statelessness numbers by country are provided in table 7).

MACIMEDE Global Dual Citizenship Database

MACIMEDE (the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development) has launched a Global Dual Citizenship Database which charts the rules that existed in 200 states across the world from 1960 to 2013 with regard to the loss or renunciation of citizenship after a citizen of a respective state voluntarily acquires the citizenship of another state. The database is freely available online and can also be downloaded to serve as the basis for the analysis of further trends.

Statelessness of children in the Caribbean

Catherine Tobin, Senior Protection Associate with UNHCR, has written an article for the International Journal of Human Rights Law entitled "*No child is an island: the predicament of statelessness for children in the Caribbean*". It explores the root causes of statelessness among children in this part of the world, focusing primarily on the dangerous interplay between ineffective birth registration systems and lack of safeguards for children who would otherwise be stateless.

[“Statelessness: a responsibility to protect?”](#)

This article by Alanna O’Malley on e-International Relations looks at the question of how the issue of statelessness can be brought under the mantle of R2P.

[“The intersection of statelessness and refugee protection in US asylum policy”](#)

An article by Maryellen Fullerton, as part of a special issue of the Journal on Migration and Human Security to mark the 35th anniversary of the 1980 US Refugee Act, explains how US asylum policy fails to adequately address the various legal problems posed by statelessness (from page 154 of the journal).

[Book on the Human Right to Citizenship](#)

A book edited by Rhoda Howard-Hassmann and Margaret Walton-Roberts, entitled “*The Human Right to Citizenship. A slippery concept*” is now available from University of Pennsylvania Press. It includes chapters by David Weissbrodt on the Human Rights of Non-Citizens; Kristy Belton on Statelessness: A matter of human rights; Carolina Moulin on Mobilising against statelessness: The case of the Brazilian Emigrant Communities; and Jacqueline Bhabha and Margareta Matache on Are children’s rights to citizenship slippery or slimy?

[Book on Agamben and the Politics of Belonging](#)

Can human rights protect the stateless? Or are they permanently excluded from politics and condemned to 'bare life'? These questions explored are by John Lechte and Saul Newman in the book “*Agamben and the politics of belonging. Statelessness, images, violence*”, available to order now from Edinburgh University Press.

What’s new: Law & Policy

(Emerging) civil society networks on statelessness in the Americas and Asia

June saw not only the convening of a regional meeting on statelessness in Europe (see above report of conference on #StatelessKids), but also civil society meetings on statelessness in the Americas and Asia. In Costa Rica, the [Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness](#) (ANA) held its first full meeting, in collaboration with UNHCR and Open Society Justice Initiative. Over 30 participants from around the region discussed the common challenges and opportunities they face when it comes to statelessness and developed ideas for the strategy of the recently established ANA moving forward. In Thailand, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, UNHCR and Mahidol University held a meeting for civil society actors from the Asia and Pacific, at which [agreement was reached that the establishment of a network would be a valuable way to channel future efforts to address statelessness in the region](#), including by allowing for the more effective sharing of good practices.



Americas civil society meeting, Costa Rica



Asia civil society meeting, Bangkok

Universal Periodic Review submissions on [Lebanon](#) and [Estonia](#), focusing on statelessness

In March, Frontiers Ruwad Association in Lebanon made a [submission to the Human Rights Council for the UPR of Lebanon](#) which focused on statelessness in that country. It highlights the law and policy challenges preventing children from accessing birth registration, impeding the right to a nationality and leading to multiple other human rights violations. In June, the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights in Estonia, jointly with the European Network on Statelessness, Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, submitted a [report to the Human Rights Council for the UPR of Estonia](#), outlining the progress that has been made towards resolving issues of statelessness and the problems that have yet to be addressed in the country.

[New round of citizenship deprivation in Bahrain, including from children](#)

This month it was reported that Bahrain had stripped a further 56 citizens of their nationality, bringing the total number this year to 128. Included in this latest round of denationalisations were 9 children and left those affected stateless.

Situation for denationalised persons of Haitian descent in Dominican Republic grows more acute

The situation for persons of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic who were stripped of their nationality by a 2013 court ruling grew more acute this month as a deadline set by the government for regularisation under the immigration law came and went. [More than 200,000 people reportedly failed to register and are now subject to expulsion](#), while the status of those whose regularisation is pending is unclear. The [UN, CARICOM and other international bodies](#) have urged the authorities to refrain from carrying out deportations and to avoid statelessness, while [Amnesty International is also petitioning](#) for the Dominican authorities to address the situation.

Birth registration and documentation project in Malaysia

The Right 2 Identity project has been working to address obstacles in access to birth registration in Sabah, Malaysia. Read the [latest newsletter](#) about this initiative to find out more about how civil registration problems are being tackled there.

Popular on Twitter this Month

The Stream @AJStream Jun 18: [What's it like to be a Haitian person without citizenship in the #DominicanRepublic? Share your story about #statelessness](#)

Partners @PartnersRelief Jun 17: [There is an urgent need to resolve the ongoing denial of justice and #statelessness for #Rohingya](#)

Asylum Aid @AsylumAid Jun 25: [Most adults don't understand what being stateless means, so @ENStatelessness is teaching teenagers <http://bit.ly/1SJyQaW> #StatelessKids](#)

AlwefaqEN @AlWefaqEN Jun 22: [Bahraini rights activists join UN campaign to end statelessness <http://ow.ly/OAIdl> <http://ow.ly/i/bpLYb> #Bahrain #humanrights](#)

Bronwen Manby @BronwenManby Jun 19: [Sen.Rubio on Girls Count Act, #birthregistration & epidemic of 'nonexistent' children <http://cnn.it/1G8wfQ7> #statelessness](#)

French Havana @FrenchieGlobal Jun 18: [Haitian-Dominicans removals created the largest case of statelessness in the Western hemisphere. <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/dominican-republic-haitians-stateless-legal-documents-citizenship-human-rights-crisis> ... via @pulitzercenter](#)

The Muslim Vibe @themuslimvibe Jun 18: [The introduction to a five part series about the Rohingya Muslims and Statelessness <https://themuslimvibe.com/current-affairs/analysis/the-rohingya-muslims-understanding-the-plight-of-statelessness/> ...](#)

A day in the life of...

Stephanie Gordon

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Leicester

Can you give us a short description of the type of work you do?

My research focuses on children in China who are 'at risk of statelessness' due to state denial of civil documentation such as birth registration, identity cards and passports. I have spent the last three years researching this problem in China, where between 13 and 30 million children at any given time might not have access to documentation, mainly due to birthing policies known as the 'one child policy'. As part of my research I spent eight months based in China conducting interviews, but I also spent time researching in Chinese instant messaging groups to gather information from Chinese parents who live in the rural areas and connect to the internet on their mobile phones. With these virtual networks I stay updated on the evolving situation within China. This gives me an understanding not only of the legal aspects of my research, but also the on-the-ground implementation of government policies.



The aim of my research is to look at a large community who are 'at risk of statelessness', to get a better understanding of what shifts people into, and out of, statelessness. It also explores the results of punitive denial of documentation, and how this impacts being recognised as a national. This comes at a time when there has already been ample research conducted on populations easily identifiable as 'stateless'. However as civil documentation systems become a staple feature in developing countries, the China example casts light on potential challenges documentation, and its denial, will pose to the stateless question in coming years.

I also work with Chinese asylum seekers in the UK, US and Australia, providing expert reports for courts determining asylum claims. The denial of documentation, and thus a legal identity, can be one important aspect to take into account in cases related to China's birthing policies.

Briefly describe what type of statelessness activities your organization is involved in.

The University of Leicester has a small, but specialized, group of people working on statelessness issues. Working with my supervisor Dr. Kelly Staples, there is a focus on the political and theoretical implications of statelessness, as well as my empirical attention to China's population.

What do you most enjoy about this work?

It is rewarding researching a population that has been overlooked, particularly as it impacts so many families in China. I found that many families were motivated to participate in my research because they saw it as an opportunity to share their experiences with an international audience - particularly as few speak English. Many who I worked with feel overlooked by the international community, perhaps because there is a misconception that birthing policies are no longer strongly implemented in China. For this reason, I find it rewarding to make a positive impact on the lives of people that I work with.

What do you find are the biggest challenges you face in your work?

Accessing data in China is particularly challenging and the topic of documentation denial is politically sensitive. I spent a long time building a social network in China, from activists to NGOs to those directly impacted by birthing policies. Building trust with people is vital to doing research in China. Thankfully opportunities for research have been exponentially expanded by the internet, and particularly for researchers who speak Mandarin.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to get involved in / others working on statelessness?

There has never been a better time to work on statelessness – the UNHCR's commitment to ending statelessness in the next ten years, a commitment launched in 2014, comes in unison with increasing numbers of researchers studying statelessness. In compliment to this we require complex solutions to problems that can rarely be solved purely with a legal approach of changing nationality laws. Political and social tensions usually underlie situations of statelessness, so my advice would be to encourage long-term solutions that take into account these tensions. We have an opportunity to work towards not only ending statelessness, but also towards questioning how fully functioning citizenship can be obtained. I also would recommend that there is more research into countries with developing civil registration systems. Even if statelessness is resolved at a legal level, state denial of documents can still render people effectively stateless, particularly when they are unable to re-enter their own country. Asylum seekers can be indefinitely detained because their own country does not recognise them and they do not have access to documentation to return to their country. Better understandings of when someone shifts from 'at risk of stateless' to 'stateless', from grounded research will also broaden conversations in the statelessness field.

What do you hope to accomplish through your work?

Firstly, I see my role as facilitating the transmission of stories told to me by the people in China that I work with. Contrary to what might be supposed, the people that I work with are not invisible or faceless, they have very real connections to the communities in which they live. Their documentation is denied not because they are invisible, but precisely because they are so visible to the Chinese government. Rather, they cannot speak English, and this means the international community might overlook their situation.

Secondly, by compiling research on punitive denial of documentation I hope to advance understandings of the problems faced by people within China, but also preempt problems that arise in developing civil documentation systems in other countries, particularly outside liberal democracies.

See also <http://thediplomat.com/2015/03/chinas-hidden-children/>

Contribute to the Statelessness Monthly Bulletin via
news@InstituteSI.org or visit www.InstituteSI.org